Correspondence and report from His Majesty's Consul at Boma respecting the Administration of the Independent State of the Congo.

No.1

TAe Earl of Cromer to the Marquess of Lansdowne. — (Received February 9.)

(Extract.)

On the Nile, near Kiro, January 21, 1903

I HAVE just visited the Belgian stations of Kiro and Lado, as also the station ot Gondokoro in the Uganda Protectorate.

Your Lordship may like to receive some remarks on the impressions I derived as regards the Belgian positions on the Upper Nile. I should, in the first instance, observe that Commandant Hanolet, who is in charge of the district, was absent in the interior of the country ; but Sir Reginald Wingate and myself were most courteously received by the officers in command at Kiro and Lado.

Fom the. point of view of appearance, the two Belgian stations contrast favourably with any of the Soudanese stations on the Nile, and still more favourably with G-ondokoro in the Uganda Protectorate. The principal dwelling-houses are of brick. They seem to be well built. The stations are kept scrupulously clean. The troops are well housed. Flourishing gardens have been created. I counted the graves of nine Europeans at Kiro, all of whom died of fever, but I am informed that the health of the place is now greatly Improved.

I had heard so many and such contradictory accounts of the Belgian Administra-tion that i was very desirous of ascertaining some concise and definite evidence on this subject. During a hurried visit, and with

opportunities of observation confined to' the banks of the river, I scarcely anticipated that I should be able to arrive at any independent opinion on the point at issue. I saw and beard, however, quite enough to gain an insight into the spirit which pervades the Administration.

It must be remembered that the 1,100 miles of country which I traversed between Khartoum and Gondokoro has, until recently, been the prey of slave-dealers, Egyptian Pashas, and dervishes. Under the circumstances, it might well have been expected that much time would be required to inspire confidence in the intentions of the new Government. It is, however, certain that, with the exception of a portion of the Nuer tribe, who live in a very remote region on the upper waters of the Sobat, confidence has been completely established in those districts which are under British rule.

Except in the un- inhabitable "Sudd " region, numerous villages are dotted along the banks of the river, fhe people, far from flying at the approach of white men as was formerly the case, run along the banks, making signs for the steamer to stop. It is clear that the Baris, Shilluks, and Dinkas place the utmost trust and confidence in the British officers with whom they are brought in contact. In spite of the difficulties of communicating with them through an interpreter— himself but slightly educated — it was impossible to mistake their manifest signs and expressions of security and content. They Hock into the Settlements without fear; and if as often happens, they will not work, it is merely because they are lazy and have few wants,' not because they entertain doubt that they will be paid for working. These remarks apply equally to Gondokoro, although I was only able to see a few of the natives there. I had not time to visit the principal Bari village, which lies at some litt'e distance from the river.

The contrast when once Congolese territory is entered is remarkable. From the frontier to Gondokoro is about 80 miles. ' The proper left, or western, bank of the river is Belgian. The opposite bank is either under the Soudanese or the Uganda Government, there are numerous islands, arid as all these are under British rule— for the thalweg, which, under Treaty, is the Belgian frontier, skirts the western bank of the river.

I cannot say that I had an opportunity of seeing a full 30 miles of Belgian territory. At the same time, I saw a good deal, and I noticed that, whereas there were numerous villages and huts on the eastern hank and on the islands, on the Belgian side not a sign of a village existed. Indeed, I do not think that any one of our party saw a single human being in Belgian territory, except the Belgian officers and men and the wives and children of the latter. Moreover, not a single native was to be seen either at Kiro or Lade, I asked the Swedish officer at Kiro whether he saw much of the natives. He replied in the negative, adding that the nearest Bavi village was situated at some distance in the interior. The Italian officer at Lado, in reply to the same question, stated that the nearest native village was seven hours distant.

The reason of all this is obvious enough. The Belgians are disliked. The people fly from them, and it is no wonder they should do so, for I am informed that the soldiers' are allowed full liberty to plunder, and that payments are rarelv made for supplies. The British officers wander, practically alone, over most parts of the country, either on tours of inspection or on shooting "expeditions. I understand that no Belgian officer can move outside the settlements without a strong guard.

It appears to me that the facts which I have stated above afford amply sufficient evidence of the spirit which animates the Belgian Administration, if, indeed, Administration it can be called. The Government, so far as I could judge, is conducted almost exclusively on commercial principles, and, even judged by that standard, it would appear that those principles are somewhat short-sighted.

Inclosure N0 2 (Translation)

THE Government of the Independent State of the Congo have examined the despatch from the Foreign Office, dated the 8th August last, which was communicated to the Signatory Powers of the Berlin Act, and declare themselves in agreement with His Majesty's Government on two fundamental points, viz., that natives ought to

be treated with humanity and gradually led into the paths of civilization, and that freedom of commerce in the Conventional Basin of the Congo ought to be entire and complete.

They deny, however, that the manner in which the State is administered involves a systematic regime "of cruelty or oppression," and that the principle of commercial freedom would introduce modifications in the rights of property as universally understood, seeing that there is not a word to this efiect in the Berlin Act. The Congo State observes that there is in that Act no provision which would sanction restrictions of any kind on the exercise of the rights of property, or give to one Signatory Power the right of intervention in the interior administration of another. It desires faithfully to observe the Berlin Act, that great International Act which binds all Signatory or adhering Powers, according to the clear grammatical sense of the text, which none has power either to take from or add to.

The English note observes that it is within the last few years that a definite shape has been assumed by the campaign conducted in England against the Congo State, on the twofold pretext of the ill-treatment of natives and the existence of commercial monopolies.

It is indeed worthy of remark that this campaign dates from the time when the prosperity of the State became assured. The State had been founded for years, and administered in the same way as it is now, its principles in regard to the State-ownership of vacant lands, and the manner in which its armed forces were organized and recruited, were known to the public, without any interest in the matter being shown by the philanthropists and traders to whose opinion the note begins by referring. This was the period during which the State Budget could only be balanced by means of the King-Sovereign's subsidies and Belgian loans, and when the commerce of the Congo did not attract attention. The term "Congo atrocities " was at that time only used in connexion with " the alleged ill-treatment of African natives by English and other adventurers in the Congo Eree State. "* After 1895 the trade of the Congo State developed remarkably, and the amount of its exports shows a progressive increase from 10 millions in 1895 to 50 millions in 1902. It is also about this time that the anti- Congo

movement took shape. As the State gave increased proof of vitality and progress, the campaign became more active, reliance being placed on a few individual and isolated cases with a view to using the interests of humanity as a pretext and concealing the real object of a covetousness which, in its impatience, has betrayed itself in the writings of pamphleteers and in the speeches of Members of the House of Commons, in which the abolition and partition of the Congo State has been clearly put forward.

Such being the object in view, it became necessary to bring a whole series of charges against the State. So far as the humanitarian side of the question is concerned, the alleged cases of violence offered to natives have once more been brought forward and re-edited ad infinitum. Eor in all the meetings, writings, and speeches which have latterly been directed against the State, it is always the same facts which are brought up, and the same evidence which is produced. With regard to the economic side of the question, the State has been accused of having violated the Act of Berlin, notwithstanding the legal opinions of such lawyers as are most qualified to speak to the point, which afford ample legal justification both for its commercial and for its land system. With regard to the political side, a heresy in international law has been imagined, viz., that a State, the independence and sovereignty of which are absolute, should, at the same time, owe its position to the intervention of foreign Powers.

With regard to the cases of ill-treatment of natives, we attach special importance to those which, according to the note, have been reported in the despatches of His Majesty's Consular Agents. At the sitting of the House of Commons on the 11th March, 1903, Lord Cranborne referred to these official documents, and we have requested through his Excellency Sir C. Phipps that the British Government will make known to us the facts alluded to. We repeat the request.

The Government of the State have, however, never denied that crimes and offences are committed in the Congo, as in every other country or Colony. The note itself recognizes that these offences have been brought before the Tribunals, and that the criminals have been punished. The conclusion to be drawn from this is that the

State fulfils its mission ; the conclusion actually drawn is that " many individual instances of cruelty have taken place in the Congo State," and that " the number of convictions falls considerably short of the number of offences actually committed." This deduction does not appear necessarily to follow. It would seem more logical to say that the severe sentences inflicted will serve as a wholesome example, and that a decrease of crime may on that account be looked for. If some offences have indeed, in the extensive territories of the State, escaped the vigilance of the judicial authorities, this is a circumstance which is not peculiar to the Congo State.

The English note proceeds chiefly on hypotheses and suppositions : " It was alleged .... It is reported .... It is also reported . . . ." and it even says that " His Majesty's Government do not know precisely to what extent these accusations may be true." This is an acknowledgment that, in the eyes of the British Government themselves, the accusations in question are neither established nor proved. And, indeed, the violence, the passion, and the improbability of many of these accusations must raise doubt in an impartial mind as to their genuineness. To give but one example : — a great deal has been made of the statement that, in a train coming down from Leopoldville to Matadi, three carriages were full of slaves, a dozen of whom were in chains and guarded by soldiers. The Governor-General was asked for a report on the case. He replied ; " The individuals represented as composing a convoy of slaves were, the great majority of them (125), levies proceeding from the district of Lualaba-Kasai, Lake Leopold II, and the Bangalas to the camp in the Lower Congo. Annexed you -wilt find lists of these persons. As regards the men in chains, they were certain individuals on whom sentence had been passed by the territorial Tribunal at Basoko, and who were on their way to undergo their sentence at the central prison at Boma. They are Nos. 3642 to 3649 on the prison register at Boma."

In the same way, quite a recent " interview," in which the usual accusations of cruelty were reproduced, is due to a person formerly in the employ of the State, who was " declared unfit for service," and who has failed to persuade the State to accept his proposal to write for the press articles favourable to the Administration.

The note ignores the replies, contradictions, and corrections which the attacks on the Agents of the State have occasioned at the various times when they have taken place. It ignores the official declarations publicly made by the Government of the State in June last, after the debate in the House of Commons on the 20th May, the report of which is annexed to the note. We also annex the text of these declarations which dealt, by anticipation, with the considerations set forth in the despatch of the 8th August.

The only fresh cause of complaint which the note brings forward-— doubtless with the object of explaining the not unimportant fact that the English Consul, who has resided in the Congo since 1901, does not appear to support, by his personal authority, the accusa-tions of private individuals — is that this Agent has been " principally occupied in the investigation of complaints preferred by British subjects." The impression which one would derive from this is that such complaints have been exceptionally numerous. JS.0 doubt the Consul has, on different occasions, communicated with the Administration at Boma in the interests of his countrymen, but the subjects of his representations, if one may judge by such of their number as the English Legation has had to bring to the notice of the Central Government at Brussels, do not appear, either in number or importance, to have been more than matters of every day administrative routine : some cases in particular concerned the regulation of the succession to property in the Congo left by deceased English subjects; the object in others was to repair errors of judicial procedure, such as occur elsewhere, and it is not even alleged that the proper action has not been taken upon these representations. The same Consul, who was appointed in 1898, wrote to the Governor-General on the 2nd July, 1901, as follows : —

" I pray believe me when I express now, not only for myself, but for my fellow- countrymen in this part of Africa, pur very sincere appreciation of your efforts on behalf of the general community — efforts to promote goodwill among all and to bring together the various elements of our local life."

IS or do the predecessors of Mr. E. Casement — for English Consuls with jurisdiction in the Congo were appointed by His Majesty

Government as long ago as 1888 — appear to have been absorbed in the examination of innumerable complaints ; at all events, that is not the view taken in the Report (the only one published) by Consul Pickersgill, who, by the mere fact of giving an account of his journey into the interior of the Congo as far as Stanley Falls, disproves the alleged impossibility for the English Consular Agents to form an opinion de visu in regard to every part of their district.

With regard to the charges against the administrative system of the State, the note deals with taxes, public armed forces, and what is termed forced labour.

It is, at bottom, the contributions made by the Congo natives to the public charges which are criticized, as if there existed a single country or Colony in which the inhabitants do not, under one form or another, bear a part in such charges. A State without resources is inconceivable. On what legitimate grounds could the exemption of natives from all taxes be based, seeing that they are the first to benefit by the material and moral advantages Introduced into Africa? As they have no money, a contribution in the shape of labour is required from them. It has been said that, if Africa is ever to be redeemed from barbarism, it must be by getting the negro to understand the meaning of work by the obligation of paying taxes : —

" It is a question (of native labour) which has engaged my most careful attention in connection with West Africa and other Colonies. To listen to the right honourable gentleman, you would almost think that it would be a good thing for the native to be idle. I think it is a good thing for him to be industrious ; and by every means in our power we must teach him to work No people ever have lived in the world's history who would not work. In the interests of the natives all over Africa, we have to teach them to work."

Such was the language used by Mr. Chamberlain in the House of Commons on the 6th August, 1901 ; and still more recently he expressed himself as follows :

" We are all of us taxed, and taxed heavily. Is that a system of forced labour % To say that because we put a tax on the native therefore he

is reduced to a condition of servitude and of forced labour is, to my mind, absolutely ridiculous. It is perfectly fair to my mind that the native should contribute something towards the cost of administering the country."

(House of Commons, the 9th March, 190a.)

" If that really is the last word of civilization, if we are to proceed on the assumption that the nearer the native or any human being comes to a pig the more desirable is his condition, of course I have nothing to say I must continue to believe that, at all even is, the progress of the native in civilization will not be secured until he has been convinced of the necessity and the dignity of labour. Therefore, I think that anything we reasonably can do to induce the native to labour is a desirable thing. And he defended the principle of taxing the native on the ground that " the existence of the tax is an inducement to him to work." (House of Commons, the 24th March, 1903.)

Moreover, it is to be observed that in nearly every part of Africa the natives are taxed. In the Transvaal every native pays a "head tax" of 21. ; in the Orange .River Colony he is subject to a "poll tax;" in Southern Rhodesia, Bechuanaland, Basutoland, Uganda, and Natal a "hut tax" is levied; in Cape Colony we find a "hut tax" and a " labour tax ; " in German East Africa also a tax is levied on huts, payable either in money, in kind, or in labour. This species of tax has also been applied in the Sierra Leone Protectorate, where payment could be made " in kind by rice or palm nuts/' and it has been suggested that work on roads and useful works should be accepted in lieu of payment in money or produce.

The legality of a tax is, therefore, not affected by the mode of its payment, whether in money or in kind, so long as the amount is not excessive. It is certainly not so in the Congo, where the work done by the native does not represent more than forty hours' work a-month. Such work, moreover, is paid for, and the tax in kind thus gives the native as it were some return for his labour.

Payment of taxes is obligatory everywhere ; and non-payment involves measures of compulsion. The regulations under which the hut- tax is levied impose on the native, for non-payment, such penalties as imprisonment and forced labour. Nor in the Congo is payment of taxes optional. Repressive measures have occasionally been rendered necessary elsewhere by the refusal of natives to conform to the law, e.g., the disturbances at Sierra Leone, in connexion with which an English publicist, speaking of the police force, states :

"Between July 1894 and February 1896 no fewer than sixty-two convictions, admittedly representing a small proportion of offences actually committed, were recorded against .them for flogging, plundering, and generally maltreating the natives."

Further instances might be recalled of the opposition encountered among native populations to the institution of governmental regulations. Civilization necessarily comes into collision with their savage instincts and barbarous customs and habits ; and it can be understood that they submit but impatiently to, and even try to escape from, a state of society which seems to them to be restrictive of their licence and excesses. It frequently happens in Africa that an exodus of natives takes place from one territory to another, in the hope of finding beyond the frontier a Government less well established or less strong, and of thus freeing themselves from all obligations and restraints. Natives of the State may quite well, under the influence of considerations of this kind, have crossed into neighbouring territories, although no kind of emigration on a large scale, such as is referred to in the English note, has ever been reported by the Commandants of the frontier provinces. On the contrary, it is a fact that natives in the Upper Nile region who had settled in British territory have returned to the left bank in consequence of the imposition of new taxes by the English authorities. Besides, if it is these territories which are alluded to, the information contained in the note would seem to be in contradiction with other particulars furnished, for instance, by Sir Harry Johnston.

"This much I can speak of with certainty and emphasis, that from the British frontier near Fort George to the limit of my journeys into the

Mbuba country of the Congo Free State, up and down the Semliki, the natives appear to be prosperous and happy. . ' . The extent to which they were building their villages and cultivating their plantations within the precincts of Fort Mbeni showed that they had no fear of the Belgians."

Major H. H. Gibbons, who was for several months on the Upper Wile, writes

" Having had occasion to know many officers, and to visit their stations in the Congo State, I am convinced that their behaviour has been much misunderstood by the press. I have quoted as a proof' my experience, which is at variance with an article recently published in the English press, in which they are accused of great cruelties."

The declaration of last June, of which a copy is inclosed, has disposed of the criticisms directed against the public forces of the State, by pointing out that recruitment for them is regulated by law, and that it is only one man in every 10,000 who is affected. To say that " the method of obtaining men. for military service is often but little different from that formerly employed to obtain slaves " is to misunderstand the carefully drawn regulations which have, on the contrary, been issued to check abuses. Levies take place in each district ; the district Commissioners settle the mode of conscription in agreement with the native Chiefs. Voluntary enlistment, and numerous re-enlistments, easily fill up the ranks, which only reach, all told, the moderate total of 15,000 men.

Those who allege, as the note says, that " the men composing the armed force of the State were in many cases recruited from the most warlike and savage tribes " must be unaware that the public forces are recruited from every province, and from the whole population. It is inconceivable that the authorities of a State, with due regard to its interests, should form an army out of undisciplined and savage elements, and instances are to be found— such as- the excesses said to have been perpetrated by irregular levies in Uganda, and the revolts which formerly occurred in the Congo — which, on the contrary, render it necessary that special care should be exercised in raising armed forces. The European establishment, consisting of

Belgian, Italian, Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish officers, maintains strict discipline, and it would be vain to seek the actual facts alluded to in the assertion that the soldiers " not infrequently terrorized over their own officers." Such an assertion is as unfounded as the one " that compulsion is often exercised by irresponsible native soldiers, uncontrolled by an European officer." For a long time past the authorities have been alive to the danger arising from the existence of stations of negro soldiers, who inevitably abuse their authority, as recognized in the Report of Sir D. Chalmers on the insurrection in Sierra Leone. In the Congo such stations have been gradually abolished.

Those who do not refuse to accept patent facts will recognize that of the reproaches levied at the State, the most unjust is the statement " that no attempt at any administration of the natives is made, and that the officers of the Government do not apparently concern themselves with such work."

It is astonishing to come across such an assertion in a despatch from a Government, one of whose members, Lord Cranborne, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, stated on the 20th May last : —

" There was no doubt that the administration of the Congo Government had been marked by a very high degree of a certain kind of administrative development. There were railways, there were steamers upon the river, hospitals had been established, and all the machinery of elaborate judicial and police systems had been set up."

Another member of the House of Commons acknowledged —

" That the Congo State had done good work in excluding alcoholic liquor from the greater part of their domain ; that they had established a certain number of hospitals, had diminished small-pox by means of vaccination, and had suppressed the Arab Slave Trade."

However limited these admissions, still they contradict the assertion now made that " the natives are left entirely to themselves, so far as any assistance in their government or in their affairs is concerned."

Such does not seem to have been the conclusion at which Mr. Pickersgill, the English Consul, had arrived as long ago as 1898.

" Has the welfare of the African," he asks, " been duly cared for in the Congo State?" He answers: "The State has restricted the liquor trade ..... it is scarcely possible to over-estimate the service which is being rendered by the Congo Government to its subjects in this matter Intertribal wars have been suppressed over a wide area, and, the imposition of European authority being steadily pursued, the boundaries of peace are constantly extending The State must be congratulated upon the security it has created for all who live within the shelter of its flag and abide by its laws and regulations. .... Credit is also due to the Congo Government in respect of the diminution of cannibalism and The yoke of the notorious Arab slave-traders has been broken, and traffic in human beings amongst the natives themselves has been diminished to a considerable degree."

This Report also showed that the labour of the native was remunerated, and gave due credit to the State for its efforts to instruct the young natives, and to open schools.

Since 1898 the general condition of the native has been still further improved. The system of carriers ("le portage a dos d'homme 3 '), the hardships of which, so far as the native was concerned, were specially pointed out by Mr. Pickersgill, has disappeared from those parts of the country where it was most practised, in consequence of the opening of railways.

Elsewhere motor cars are used as means of transport. The " sentry," the station of negro soldiers which the Consul criticized, not without reason, no longer exists. Cattle have been introduced into every district. Sanitary Commissions have been instituted. Schools and workshops have multiplied.

"The native," says the inclosed document,* " is better housed, better clad, and better fed ; he is replacing his huts by better built and healthier dwelling-places ; thanks to existing transport facilities, he is able to obtain the produce necessary to satisfy his new- wants ; workshops have been opened for him, where he learns handicrafts,

such as those of the blacksmith, carpenter, mechanic, and mason ; he extends his plantations and, taking example by the white man, learns rational modes of agriculture ; he is always able to obtain medical assistance ; he sends his children to the State school-colonies and to the missionary schools."

As stated in the House of Commons, it is only right to recognize that the material and moral regeneration of Central Africa cannot be the work of a day. The results so far obtained have been considerable, and these we shall try to consolidate and develop, in spite of the way in which an effort is being made to hamper the action of the State, which in the real interests of civilization should rather be promoted.

The English note does not show that the economic system of the State is in opposition to the Berlin Act. It does not meet (he points of law and fact by means of which the State has demonstrated the conformity of its system of land tenure and concessions with the provisions of that Act. It does not explain either how or why freedom of trade — a term used at the Conference of Berlin in its usual, grammatical, and economic sense — is incomplete in the Congo State because there are landowners there.

The note confuses the utilization of his property by the owner with trade. The native who collects on behalf of the owner does not become the owner of what is so collected, and naturally cannot dispose of it to a third party, any more than a miner can rob the proprietor of the produce of the mine and dispose of it himself. These rules are in accordance with the principles of justice and are explained in numerous documents, such as legal opinions and judicial decisions, some of which are annexed. His Majesty's Government do not deny that the State is justified in allotting domain lands to bond fide occupants, or that the native has no longer any right to the produce of the soil as soon as the " land is reduced into individual occupation." The distinction is without legal foundation. If the State can part with land, it is because the native is not the owner ; by what title could he then retain a right to the produce of property which has been lawfully acquired by others? Could it be contended, for instance, that the Low-er Congo Railway Company, or the South Cameroons Company, or the Italian Colonial Trading Company are, on the

ground that they are not at present in occupation, bound to allow the native to plunder the territories allotted to them? As a matter of fact, more-over, in the Congo State the appropriation of lands worked on Government account or by the Concessionary Companies is an accomplished fact. The State and the Companies have devoted large sums, amounting to many millions of francs, to the development of the lands in question, and more especially to that of the forests. There can, therefore, be no doubt that throughout the territories of the Congo the State really and completely works its property, just as the Companies really and completely work their Concessions.

The state of affairs then which actually exists, and is established in the Independent State, is such that there is really no need, as far as the State itself is concerned, to dwell longer on the theory set forth in the note which deals in turn with the rights of the State, with those of bond fide occupiers, and those of the natives.

Still this theory calls for the attention of the Powers in view of the serious difficulties which would arise were it to be implicitly accepted.

The note lays down the three following propositions .

" The State has the right to partition the State lands among bond fide occupants."

" The natives will, as the land is so divided out amongst bond fide occupiers, lose their right of roaming over it and collecting the natural fruits which it produces."

" Until unoccupied land is reduced into individual occupation, and so long as the produce can only be collected by the native, the native should be free to dispose of that produce as he pleases."

There is no single one of these propositions but apparently excludes the other two, and, as a matter of fact, such contradictions amount to a denial of the right to grant Concessions.

If bond fide occupiers ever existed they have become proprietors ; occupation, where it can be exercised, is under all legislative codes,

one of the methods by which property can be acquired, and in the Congo State titles of ownership deriving from it have been legally registered. If the land has never been legally occupied, it is without an owner, or, rather the State is the owner: the State can allot it to a third party, for whom such allotment is a complete and absolute title. In either case it is hard to see how the fruits of the soil can be reserved for any but the owner on the pretext that the latter is not able to collect the produce of his property.

By a curious contradiction it is observed in the note that, as a consequence of the allotment of lands by the State, the natives " lose their right of collecting the natural fruits," and, on the other hand, that they retain the right of disposing of these fruits " until unoccupied land is reduced into individual occupation." It is difficult to understand what is meant by a right which belongs to the natives or not according to the action of a third party. Either they lost their rights on the lands being allotted, and in that case they have lost them entirely and completely, or else they have retained them, and are entitled to retain them, although " the land is reduced into individual occupation."

Again, what are we to understand by the expressions " bond fide" occupiers and " individual occupation ? " Who is to determine whether the occupier has brought his lands into a state of individual occupation, whether he is able to collect their produce, or whether it is still for the native to do so ? In any case, such a question is essentially one to be settled by municipal law.

The note is, moreover, incomplete in another respect. It states that where the land has not yet been worked by those who have a right to it, the option of working should belong to the native. Rights would thus be given to the natives to the prejudice of the Government or of white concessionnaires, but the note does not explain how nor by whom the wrong thus caused would be repaired or made good. Though the system thus advocated cannot be applied in the Congo State, as there are no longer any unappropriated lands there, attention should be called to the statement in the interest of white men established in the conventional basin. If it is right to treat the negro

well, it is none the less just not to despoil the white man, who, in the interest of all, must remain the dominant race.

From an economic point of view, it would be very regrettable if, in spite of the rights regularly acquired by white men, the domain lands were, even temporarily, handed over to the natives. Such a course would involve a return to their former condition ol abandonment, when the natives left them unproductive, for the collection of rubber, the plantation of coffee, cocoa, tobacco, &c, date from the day when the State itself took the initiative : the export trade was insignificant before the impetus it received from Government enterprise. Such a course would furthermore certainly involve the neglect of rational methods of work, of planting and of replanting — measures which the State and the Concessionary Companies have assumed as an obligation with a view to securing the preservation of the natural riches of the country.

Never in the Congo, so far as we know, have requests to buy natural produce been addressed to the rightful owners. Up to now the only attempts made have been to buy the produce which has been stolen, and the State, as was its duty, has had those guilty of these unlawful attempts prosecuted.

It is not true, as has been asserted, that the policy of the State has killed trade ; it has, on the contrary, created the materials which trade deals in and keeps up the supply ; it is thanks to the State that, on the Antwerp market — and soon even in the Congo where the possibility of establishing trade depots is being considered — 5,000 tons of rubber collected in the Congo can be annually put on sale to all and sundry without privilege or monopoly, while formerly, in 1887, for instance, the rubber export amounted to hardly 30 tons. It is the State which, after having created, at its own expense, the material of, trade, carefully preserves the source of it by means of planting and replanting.

It must not be forgotten either that the Congo State has been obliged to rely on its own resources. It was forced to utilize its domain in the public interest. All the receipts of the domain go into the Treasury, as also the dividends of the shares which the State holds in exchange for

Concessions granted. It has only been by fully utilizing its domain lands, and pledging the greater part of their revenues, that it has been able to raise loans, and encourage the construction of railways by guarantees of interest, thus realizing one of the means most advocated by the Brussels Conference for promoting civilization in Central Africa. Nor has it hesitated to mortgage its domain lands with this object.

The Berlin Act is not opposed to such a course, for it never proscribed the rights of property as there is now an ex post facto attempt to make out, an attempt tending, consciously or not, to the ruin of the whole conventional basin of the Congo.

It will not escape the notice of the Powers that the English note, by suggesting a reference to the Court at The Hague, tends to bring into consideration as cases for arbitration questions of sovereignty and internal administration as questions for arbitra-tion which, according to prevailing doctrines, are excluded from arbitral decisions. As far as the present; case is concerned, it must be assumed that the suggestion of referring the matter to the Court at The Hague has a general meaning, if it is true that, in the opinion of the English Chambers of Commerce, " the principles and practice introduced into the administration of the affairs of the French Congo, the Congo Free State, and other areas in the conventional basin of the Congo being [sic] in direct opposition to the Articles of the Act of Berlin, 1885." The Government of the Congo State have never ceased advocating arbitration as a mode of settling questions which are of an international nature, and can thus be suitably treated, as, for instance, the divergencies of opinion which have arisen in connexion with the lease of the territories of the Bahr-el-Ghazal.

The Government of the Congo State, after careful examination of the English note, remain convinced that, in view of its vagueness, and the complete lack of evidence, which is implicitly admitted, there is no tribunal in the world, supposing there were one possessing competent jurisdiction, which could, far from pronouncing a condemna-tion, take any decision other than to refuse action on mere supposition.

If the Congo State is attacked, England may admit that she, more than any other nation, has been the object of attacks and accusations of every kind, and the list would be long of the campaigns which have at various times, and even quite recently, been directed against her colonial administration. She has certainly not escaped criticism in regard to her numerous and bloody wars against native populations, nor the reproach of oppressing natives and invading their liberty. Has she not been blamed in regard to the long insurrections in Sierra Leone ; to the disturbed state of Nigeria, where quite recently, according to the English newspapers, military measures of repression cost, on one single occasion, the lives of 700 natives, of most of their Chiefs, and of the Sultan ; acid to the conflict in Somaliland. which is being carried on at the cost of many lives, -without, however, exciting expressions of regret in the House of Commons, except on the score of the heavy expense ?

Seeing that these attacks have left England indifferent, it is somewhat surprising to find her now attaching such importance to those made on the Congo State.

There is, however, reason to think that the natives of the Congo State prefer the Government of a small and pacific nation, whose aims remain as peaceful as its creation which was founded on Treaties concluded with the natives.

(Signed) CHR DE CUVELIEE. Brussels, September 17, 1903.

Annexes.*

I. " Bulletin Officiel de l'Btat Independant du Congo," Jum 1903. •

II. Judgments delivered by the Tribunals of Erench Congo.

III. Opinions of Messrs. Yan Maldeghem and de Paepe, Van Berchem, Barboux, and Nys.

Translations of Extracts from Annex L

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In conformity with Articles II and XIII of the Berlin Act, it (the Congo State) has assured to all flags, without distinction of nationality, free access to all its interior waters and full and entire freedom of navigation. The railway, which has been constructed to obviate the innavigability of the lower river, is open to the traffic of all nations in conformity with Article XVI,

* Copies have been sent to the Library of each House of Parliament,

In conformity with Article III, there is no differential treatment either of ships or goods, and no tax is levied on foreigners which is not equally borne by nationals. % In conformity with Article IV, no transit due has been imposed.

In conformity with Article VI, freedom of conscience and the free exercise of worship are guaranteed to natives, to foreigners, and to the missions of all creeds.

In conformity with Article VII, the State has adhered to the Convention of the Universal Postal Union.

Availing itself of the power conferred by Article X, the Congo State has declared itself perpetually neutral, and in no circumstance has failed in the duties imposed by neutrality.

In conformity with Article XII, it has endeavoured, in case of any international difference, to 'have recourse to mediation and arbitration, and has never declined to accept such procedure.

In conformity with the Declaration of the 2nd July, 1890, the import and export duties levied do not exceed the limits fixed by the Agreements of the 8th April, 1892, and the 10th March, 1902, between the State, France and Portugal.

Article I of the Act of Berlin lays down that "the trade of all nations shall enjoy complete freedom in the Conventional basin of the Congo," and, by Article V, "no monopoly or favour of any kind in matters of trade" shall be granted there. These provisions, like the rest, have been respected by the Congo State in the 1etter and in the spirit.

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Freedom of trade is complete in the Congo, and is restricted neither by monopoly nor privilege. Everyone is free to sell or buy every sort of produce in which it is lawful to trade. The law protects this freedom by forbiddirg any interference with the freedom of business transactions ; it punishes "any one who has employed violence or threats with a view to compel the natives, whether on the roads in the interior, or in the markets, to part with their goods to particular persons or at particular prices ;"it punishes " those who, by violence, abuse, or threats, shall, have interfered with the freedom of trade, with aview either to stop trade caravans on the public roads or to obstruct the freedom of traffic whether by land or water."!

It is asserted that the principle of the freedom of trade is infringed by the appropriation by the State of vacant and ownerless lands within its boundaries. When by the Decree of the 1st July, 1885, the State declared that "no one has the right to occupy vacant lands without a title; vacant lands are to be considered as belonging to the State," t it did so in reliance on a legal principle which is universally admitted, its action in this matter was not, as has been said, the first step in a deliberate policy of' exclusiveness. That principle was inscribed in the Codes of all civilized countries; it has been sanctioned by all Colonial legislative systems.

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If it were true that, by declaring all ownerless lands to be Government property, the Congo State had expropriated the natives, all these various legislative systems could be attacked on the same ground. It is generally admitted that the native has no real title to the ownership of the vast stretches of country which from time

immemorial be has allowed to lie fallow, or to the forests which he has never turned to profit. But the law of the Congo State is careful to maintain the natives in the enjoyment of the lands they occupy and, as a nlatter of fact, not only are they not disturbed in this enjoyment, hut they are actually extending the lands they cultivate and their plantations as' their needs grow. The State has been at much pains to prevent the natives from being, robbed.

"No one has the right to dispossess natives of the lands which they occupy (Ordinance of the 1st July, 1885, Article 2).

"The lands occupied by the native, population under the authority of their Chiefs, shall continue to be governed by the local customs and usages (Decree of the 14th September, 1886, Article 2).

" All Acts or Agreements which would tend to drive the natives from the territories they occupy, or to deprive them directly or indirectly of their liberty or means of livelihood, are prohibited (Decree of the 14th September, 1886, Article 2).

*** Penal Code, Art. 56 (Decree of the 26th May, 1888, Bulletin Officiel, 1897, p. 31). t Penal Code, Art. 57 (fdem, p. 31). t Bulletin Officiel, 1885, p. 31.**

" In cases where the lands which form the subject of application are occupied in part by natives, the Governor-General, or his Delegate, shall intervene in order, if possible, to effect an arrangement with them, securing to the applicant the lands so occupied either by cession or by lease, but the State is not to be put to any expense in the matter (Decree of the 9th April, 1893, Article 5).

"When native villages are inclosed in lands which have either been disposed of or leased, the natives may, so long as the land has not been officially measured, take into cultivation, without the consent of either the owner or the lessor, the vacant lands surrounding their villages (Decree of the 9th April, 1893, Article 6).

" The members of the Land Commission shall examine with special care the question whether the lands applied for ought not to be

reserved either for the public use or with a view to allow of the extension of cultivation by the natives (Decree of the 2nd February, 1893, Article 2)."

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If it is inexact to say that the natives have been robbed of immemorial rights, it is equally so to assert that the policy of the State has aimed at the exclusion of private trading in order to assure greater advantages for its own commercial enterprises.

Such a statement can only be the result of a misapprehension of the various phases through which the Congo trade has passed since 1885. At that time private enterprise was centred in the Lower Congo only. The Government, far from wishing to close the Upper Congo, declared its access free to all. The Decree of the 30th April, 1887, led, on the contrary, to various commercial firms establishing themselves above Stanley Pool, owing to the facilities it afforded for settling on the domain lands.

Article 6 of that Decree provided ;

"Non-natives who desire to found commercial or agricultural establishments in the districts above Stanley Pool, or in others to be eventually designated by the Governor- General of the Congo, shall be at liberty to take possession with this view of an area, the maximum size of which shall be fixed by the Governor- General ; provided that they fulfil such conditions as he shall lay down, they shall enjoy a preferential right to the eventual acquisition of property in such lands at a price which shall be fixed by him beforehand."

And Article 7 added :

" The non-natives who, in the same regions, shall desire to occupy lands, of which the area shall exceed the maximum referred to in the preceding Article, may occupy them provisionally on such conditions as the Governor-General shall determine. He shall further decide whether the preferential right alluded to in the preceding Article shall be given to them in regard to this larger extent of land."*

"With a view to assist commercial enterprise in the regions of the interior, the Government even exempted from export duty — the only customs duties which they could at that time levy- — all native produce coming from the territories above Stanley Pool.

" Prom the 1st January, 1888," so ran Article 1 of the Ordinance of the 19th October, 1897, "and till further orders, native produce coming from the State territories on the left bank of Stanley Pool and above that lake shall be exempted from export duty."

Later, by the Decree of the 17th October, 1889,t the Government announced that applications might be presented for concessions to work rubber and other vegetable .produce in the State 'forests of the Upper Congo where such produce was not already worked by the native population.

By the Decree of the 9th July, 1890, the collection of ivory within the State domains was entirely given up to private persons throughout such parts of the Congo as were at that time visited by the steamers.

These Regulations were applicable to all foreign enterprise, without distinction of nationality ; they show that there was no such policy of ostracism in regard to private enterprise such as is now attributed to the State.

It has not been the fault of the Government that nationals of all countries have not profited by this **liberal** system. They continued, however, to confine themselves, with few exceptions, to the Lower Congo. The Companies which decided to extend their operations in the central districts of the Congo found every facility for the establishment of agencies, and acquired the favourable position which they now enjoy.

*** Bulletin Offlciel, 1887. p. 72, t Bulletin Offlciel. 1888, p. 3. + Bulletin Offlciel, 1889, p. 2 18.**

The State can hardly be blamed because, in face of the almost universal inaction on the part of private individuals, it endeavoured to turn its territories to account by working its domain lands, either on

its own account or through others. It was, however, the only way to secure the funds necessary for the Budget, the charges in which steadily increased with the extension of the public service, and to give the country the benefit of an economic system by imposing upon the concessionary Companies the obligation to undertake works of public utility.

The Government, further, were careful not to abandon a policy of moderation in the matter. When by the Decree of the 30th October, 1892, they defined regions reserved for working by the domain (those, that is to say, in which it had been ascertained, after inquiry, that the natives had never engaged in the collection of rubber), they still left vast zones at the disposal of the public, and allowed to private persons the exclusive right to work the rubber on the Government properties there. As a matter of fact, the zones in question comprised more than a quarter of the vacant State lands, apart from the whole country below Stanley Pool. Nevertheless, the Companies persisted for some years more in not moving towards these regions ; it has only been since 1897 that there have been any signs of general activity. It was then that the numerous factories which are still co be found there were started in the Kassai, Ikelemba, and Lulonga districts, and on the banks of the Congo. But it is to be noted that with one exception none but Belgian Companies decided to put their capital into those enterprises, and to take the consequent risks. Foreigners have held aloof, in spite of the fact that they were at perfect liberty to establish themselves in these regions ; even the firms which had been long established in the Lower Congo, and especially the English bouses, did not consider the moment favourable for establishing branches in the Upper Congo. The above remark is generally applicable, in so far that, also in the territories for which Concessions have been given, not one of the concessionary Companies has found any foreign interests previously existing ; indeed, certain foreigners who were interested in one of the most important of them, the Anglo-Belgian India-Rubber and Exploration Company, which was founded by an English group, have parted with their interests.

The commercial field open to private persons in the Congo never has been and is not limited ; trade is free, so far as it is legitimate,

throughout the country, and in certain regions the State, far from organizing any excessive working of its domain lands, has even renounced the exercise of its rights of property. To give one instance only the **Dutch Company**, the value of whose exports was 730,000 fr. in 1887, exported in 1901 goods to the value of more than 3,000,000 fr.

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The work of organization has since been going on over the whole country by the more and more effective occupation of the territory ; posts and stations have been multiplied, and now number 215 ; the work of the administrative, judicial, and sanitary authorities has expanded ; transport facilities have been introduced ; two lines of railways have been laid in the Lower Congo, and there are others either being constructed or proposed in the Upper Congo; seventy-nine steamers and boats have been put on the river and its affluents; 1,500 kilom. of telegraph and telephone lines have been laid; carriage roads have been built, on which the use of automobiles will put an end to the system of carriers (" portage a dos d'homme "); vaccine institutes have been established with a view to putting a stop, through the increased use of lymph, to the ravages of small-pox ; water-works have been built in important centres, such as Boma and Matadi ; hospitals for blacks and whites have been founded at different posts, as also Red Cross stations and a bacteriological institute ; importation of spirituous liquors and trade in them has been prohibited almost everywhere, while the importation of alcoholic drinks made with absinthe, as also trade in them, have been forbidden everywhere ; the trade in improved fire-arms and ammunition for them has been absolutely forbidden ; cattle have been introduced at all the stations, and model farms have been established ; Sanitary Commissions have been instituted whose duty it is to watch over the requirements of the elements of public health.

This general development is necessarily accompanied by an improvement of the conditions in which the native lives, wherever he comes into contact with the European element. Materially, he is better housed, better clad, and better fed; he is replacing his huts by better built and healthier dwelling-places ; thanks to existing transport

facilities, he is able to obtain the produce necessary to satisfy his new wants ; workshops have been opened for him, where he learns handicrafts, such as those of the blacksmith, carpenter, mechanic, and mason; he extends his plantations, and, taking example by the white man, learns rational modes of agriculture ; he is always able to obtain medical assistance ; he sends his children to the State school-colonies and to the missionary schools. Steps have been taken to safeguard the individual liberty of the blacks, and especially to prevent labour contracts between blacks and non-natives degenerating into disguised slavery. It is on this point that the Decree of the 5th November, 1888, enters into the most minute details concerning the length of the engagement, the form of the contract, and the payment of wages. Recent legislation in French Congo, which has very properly been praised by the English organs, bas been dictated by the like solicitude for the natives.

The native is free to seek by work the remuneration which contributes to the increase of his well-being. One of the objects, indeed, of the general policy of the State is to aim at the regeneration of the race by impressing them with the high idea of the necessity of work. It is intelligible that Governments, conscious of their moral responsibility, should not advocate the right of the inferior races to be idle, which would entail the continuance of a social system opposed to civilization. The Congo State aims at carrying out its educational mission by requiring the native to contribute, by means of a tax in kind, for which, however, payment is made to him, to the development of the State forests; the amount of wich payments was, in the Budget for 1903, nearly 3,000,000 f'r. The legality' of such a system of developing the State property rests not only on the universal principle which attributes to the State the possession of ownerless lands, but also on the cession which the local Chiefs have made to the State, by peaceful methods and Treaties, of such political and land rights as they may have possessed; and on the fact that it is the State itself which bas revealed to the natives the existence of those natural riches of which they were ignorant by showing them how to work ; it is the State, too, which has bound itself, equally with private persons, to plant and replant, and thus to insure the preservation and perpetuity of those natural relies which the

carelessness of some and the lust of gain of others could not have failed to destroy.

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The system which the State has followed, while forwarding the economical development of the country, has at the same time caused a considerable commercial movement inasmuch as the exports now amount to a value of .50,000,000, and 5,000 tons of rubber from the Congo forests are sold every year at Antwerp to the highest bidder.

Whatever may have been said this prosperity has not been attained to the detriment of the native. It has been asserted that the native populations must of necessit be badly treated because they are subjected on the one hand to military service, an on the other to the payment of certain taxes.

Military service is no more slavery in the Congo than anywhere else where the system of conscription is in force. The manner in which the public forces are recruited and organized has formed the subject of the most minute legislative provisions, with a view to the avoidance of abuses. As a matter of fact military service is not a heavy burden to the population, from whom it only takes one man in 10,000. To show the errors which have been believed in regard to the public forces it is necessary once more to point out that they are composed entirely of regular troops, and there are not irregular levies " composed of undisciplined and barbarous elements. Care has been taken gradually to get rid of posts of black soldiers, and at the present moment every military post is commanded by a white officer. The increase in the number of officials has allowed of giving European officers to all detachments of these forces.

In regard to contributions in kind which are levied on the native by the authorities, such taxes are as legitimate as any other. They do not impose on the native burdens of a different or heavier kind than the forms of impost enforced in the neighbouring Colonies, such as the but tax. The native thus bears his share of the public burden as a return for the protection afforded him by the State, and this share is a

light one since on an average it means for the native no more than forty hours of work a- month.

It is unfortunately true that acts of violence have been committed against the natives in the Congo, as everywhere else in Africa: the Congo State has never sought either to deny or to conceal them. The detractors of the State show themselves to be prejudiced when they quote these acts as the necessary consequence of a bad system of administration, or when they assert that they are tolerated by the higher authorities.

Whenever any European official has been guilty of such acts he has been punished by the Courts, and a certain number of Europeans are at this moment in the prisons of the State expiating their offences against the penal laws which protect the life and person of the native. If the enormous extent of the Congo State is taken into account, such cases are the exception, as is obvious from the fact that recent publications attacking the Congo State have been obliged, in support of their indictment, to take up incidents nearly ten years old, and even to have recourse, amongst others, to the testimony of a commercial agent actually condemned for his excesses against the blacks. It is worthy of remark that the Catholic missionaries have never called attention to this general system of cruelty which is imputed to the State, and if judicial statistics demonstrate the stern measures that have been taken by the Criminal Courts, it does not follow that there is more crime in the Congo than in other Central African Colonies.

No. 3. (actual report by roger casement)

Mr. Casement to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received December 12.)

My Lord, London, December 11, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to submit my Report on my recent journey on the Upper Congo.

I left Matadi on the 5th June, and arriving at Leopoldville on the 6th, remained in the neighbourhood of Stanley Pool until the 2nd July, when I set out for the Upper Congo. My return to Leopoldville was on the 15th September, so that the period spent in the Upper River was one of only two and a-half months, during which time I visited several points on the Congo River itself, up to the junction of the Lulongo River, ascended that river and its principal feeder, the Lopori, as far as Bongandanga. and went round Lake Mantumba.

Although my visit was of such brief duration, and the points touched at nowhere lay far off the beaten tracks of communication, the region visited was one of the most central in the Congo State, and the district in which most of my time was spent, that of the Equator, is probably one of the most productive. Moreover, I was enabled, by visiting this district, to contrast its present day state with the condition in which I had known it some **sixteen years ago. Then (in 1887)** I had visited most of the places I now revisited, and I was thus able to institute a comparison between a state of affairs I had myself seen when the natives lived their own savage lives in anarchic and disorderly communities, uncontrolled by Europeans, and that created by more than a decade of very energetic European intervention. That very much of this intervention has been called for no one who formerly knew the Upper Congo could doubt, and there arc to-day widespread proofs of the great energy displayed by Belgian officials in introducing their methods of rule over one of the most savage regions of Africa.

Admirably built and admirably kept stations greet the traveller at many points; a fleet of river steamers, numbering, I believe, forty-eight, the property of the Congo Government, navigate the main river and its principal affluents at fixed intervals. Regular means of communication are thus afforded to some of the most inaccessible parts of Central Africa.

A railway, excellently constructed in view of the difficulties to be encountered, now connects the ocean ports with Stanley Pool, over a tract of difficult country, which formerly offered to the weary traveller on foot many obstacles to be overcome and many days of great bodily fatigue. To-day the railway works most efficiently, and I

noticed many improvements, both in the permanent way and in the general management, since the date of my last visit to Stanley Pool in January 1901. The cataract region, through which the railway passes, is a generally unproductive and even sterile tract of some 220 miles in breadth. This region is, I believe, the home, or birthplace, of the sleeping sickness — a terrible disease, which is, all too rapidly, eating its way into the heart of Africa, and has even traversed the entire continent to well-nigh the shores of the Indian Ocean. The population of the Lower Congo has been gradually reduced by the unchecked ravages of this, as yet, undiagnosed and incurable disease, and as one cause of the seemingly wholesale diminution of human life which I everywhere observed in the regions revisited, a prominent place must be assigned to this malady. The natives certainly attribute their alarming death-rate to this as one of the inducing causes, although they attribute, and I think principally, their rapid decrease in numbers to other causes as well. Perhaps the most striking change observed during my journey into the interior was the great reduction observable everywhere in native life. Communities I had formerly known as large and flourishing centres of population are to-day entirely gone, or now exist in such diminished numbers as to no longer recognizable. The southern shores of Stanley Pool had formerly a population of fully 5,000 Batekes, distributed through the three towns of Ngaliema's (Leopoldville), Kinchasa, and Ndolo, lying within a few miles of each other. These people, some twelve years ago, decided to abandon their homes, and in one night the great majority of them crossed over into the French territory on the north shores of Stanley Pool. Where formerly had stretched these populous native African villages, I saw to-day only a few scattered European houses, belonging either to Government officials or local traders. In Leopoldville to-day there are not, I should estimate, 100 of the original natives or their descendants now residing. At Kinchasa a few more more may be found dwelling around one of the European trading dep6ts, while at Ndolo none remain, and there is nothing there but a station of the Congo Railway Company and a Government post. These Bateke people were not, perhaps, particularly desirable subjects for an energetic Administration, which desired, above all things, progress and speedy results. They were themselves interlopers from the northern shores of the Congo River, and derived a very profitable existence as trading middlemen,

exploiting the less sophisticated population among whom they had established themselves. Their loss to the southern shores of Stanley Pool is none the less to be deplored, I think, for they formed, at any rate, a connecting link between an incoming European commercial element and the background of would-be native suppliers.

Leopoldville is sometimes spoken of as a Congo town, but it cannot rightly be so termed. Apart from the Government station, which, in most respects, is very well planned, there is nothing at all resembling a town — barrack would be the correct term. The Government station of- Leopoldville numbers, I was informed by its Chief, some 130 Europeans, and probably 3,000 native Government workmen, who all dwell in well ordered lines of either very well-built European houses, or, for the native staff, mud-built huts. Broad paths, which may be termed streets, connect the various parts of this Government Settlement, and an elementary effort at lighting by electricity has already evolved three lights in front of the house of the Commissaire-General. Out-side the Government staff, the general community, or public of Leopoldville, numbers less than one dozen Europeans, and possibly not more than 200 native dependents of their households or trading stores. This general public consists of two missionary establishments, numbering in all 4 Europeans; a railway station with, I think, 1 European ; 4 trading establishments — 1 Portuguese, 1 Belgian, 1 English, and 1 German — numbering 7 Europeans, with, perhaps, 80 or 100 native dependents; 2 British West African petty traders, and a couple of Loango tailor boys, who make clothes for the general community. This, I think, comprises almost all those not immediately dependent upon the Government.

These shops and traders do scarcely any business in native produce, of which there may be said to be none in the district, but rely upon a cash trade in Congolese currency, carried on with the large staff of Government employes, both European and native. Were this cash dealing to cease, the four European shops would be forced to put up their shutters. During the period of my stay at Leopoldville it did actually cease, and, for reasons which were not known publicly, the large native staff of Congo Government workmen, instead of receiving a part of their monthly wages in cash to spend locally — as also those being paid off on the expiry of their contracts— were

remunerated by the Government in barter goods, which were issued from a Government store. This method of payment did not satisfy either the native Government employes or the local traders, and I heard many complaints on this score. The traders complained, some of them to myself, that as they had no other form of trading open to them, save this with the Government staff against cash, for the Government to itself now pay these men in goods was to end, at a blow, all trade dealings in the district. The native workmen complained, too, that they were paid in cloth which often they did not want in their own homes, and in order to have the wherewithal to purchase what they wanted, a practice at once arose amongst these men to sell for cash, at a loss to themselves, the cloth they had been forced to receive in payment from the Government store. The workmen lost- on this transaction, and so did the traders. Pieces of cloth which were charged by the Government at 10 fr. each in-paying off the workmen, these men would readily part with for 7 fr., and even for 6 fr. in cash. I myself, one day in June, bought for 7 fr. a-piece, from two just-discharged Government workmen, two pieces of coth which had been charged against them at 10 fr. each. These men wished to buy salt at one of the local stores, and to obtain the means of doing so, they readily sacrificed 3 fr. in each 10 fr. of their pay. The traders, too, complained that by this extensive sale of cotton goods at reduced rates by the Government employe's, their own sales of cloth at current prices were rendered well nigh impossible throughout the district.

The 3,000 Government workpeople at Leopoldville are drawn from nearly every part of the Congo State. Some, those from the cataract district especially, go Voluntarily seeking employment, but many, and I believe a vast majority, are men, or lads, brought from districts of the Upper Congo, and who serve the authorities not primarily at their own seeking. On the 16th June last, five Government workpeople brought me their contracts of engagement with a request that I might tell them how longa period they still had to serve. They were all Upper Congo men, and had already nearly completed the full term of their engagement. The contracts, in each case, appeared as having been signed and drawn up at Boma on behalf of the Governor-General of the Congo. State, and were, in each case, for a term of seven years. The men informed me that they had never been to

Boma, and that the whole of their period of service hart been spent either at Leopoldville or on the Upper Congo. In three of these cases I observed that an alteration had been made in the period of service, in the following terms :

" Je reduis de sept a cinq ans le terme de service du "

This entry was signed by the acting State Inspector of the district. It seemingly had not been observed, for it was struck out by his successor, and, as a matter of fact, the full period of seven years was, in each case, within a few months of completion.

On the whole the Government workmen at Leopoldville struck me as being well cared for, and they were certainly none of them idle. The chief difficulty in dealing with so large a staff arises from the want of a sufficiency of food supply in the surrounding country. The staple food of the entire Upper Congo is a preparation of the root of "the cassava plant, steeped and boiled, and made up into loaves or puddings. of varying wieight. The natives of the districts around Leopoldville are forced to provide a fixed quantity each week of this form of food, which is levied by requisitions on all the surrounding villages. The European Government staff is also- mainly dependent upon food supplies obtained from the natives of the neighbourhood in a similar manner. This, however necessary, is not a welcome task to the native suppliers who complain that their numbers are yearly decreasing, while the demands- made upon them remain fixed, or tend even to increase.

The Government station at Leopoldville and its extensive staff, exist almost solely in connection with the running of Government steamers upon the Upper Congo.

A hospital for Europeans and an establishment designed as a native hospital are- in charge of a European doctor. **Another doctor also resides in the Government station whose bacteriological studies are unremitting and worthy of much praise.**

The native hospital — not, I am given to understand, through the fault of the local medical staff — is, however, an unseemly place.

When I visited the three mud huts- which serve this purpose, all of them dilapidated, and two with the thatched roofs almost gone, I found seventeen sleeping sickness patients, male and female, lying about in the utmost dirt. Most of them were lying on the bare ground — several out on the pathway in front of the houses, and one, a woman, had fallen into the fire just prior to my arrival (while in the final, insensible stage of the disease), and had burned herself very badly. She had since been well bandaged, but was still lying out on the ground with her head almost in the fire, and while I sought to speak to her, in turning, she upset a pot of scalding water over her shoulder. All of the seventeen persons I saw were near their end, and on my second visit, two days later, the 19th June, I found one of them lying dead out in the open.

In somewhat striking contrast to the neglected state of these people, I found, within a couple of hundred yards of them, the Government workshop for repairing and fitting the steamers. Here all was brightness, care, order, and activity, and it was impossible not to admire and commend the industry which had created and maintained in constant working order this useful establishment. In conjunction with a local missionary, some effort was made during my stay at Leopoldville, to obtain an amelioration of the condition of the sleeping-sickness people in the native hospital, but it was stated, in answer to my friend's representations, that nothing could be done in the way of building a proper hospital until plans now under consideration had been matured elsewhere. The structures i had visited, which the local , medical staff greatly deplored, had endured for several years as the only form of hospital accommodation provided for the numerous native staff of the district.

The Government stores at Lecpoldville are large and well built, and contain not only the goods the Government itself sends up river in its fleet of steamers, but also the goods of the various Concession Companies. As a rule, the produce brought down river by the Government steamers is transhipped direct into the railway trucks which, run alongside the wharf, and is carried thence by train to Matadi for shipment to Europe. The various Companies carrying on operations on the Upper Congo, and who hold Concessions from the Congo Government, are bound, I was told, by Conventions to

abstain from carrying, save within the limits of their Concessions, either goods or passengers. This interdiction extends to their own merchandise and to their own agents. Should they carry, by reason of imperative need, outside these limits any. of their own goods or their own'people, they are bound to pay to the Congo Government either the freight or passage money according to the Government tariff, just as though the goods or passengers had been conveyed on one of the Government vessels. The tariff upon goods and passengers carried along the interior waterways is a fairly high one, not perhaps excessive under the circumstances, but still one that, by reason of this virtual monopoly, can produce a yearly revenue which must go far towards maintaining the Government flotilla. By the estimates for 1902, published in the " Bulletin Officiel " of January this year, the transport service is credited with a production of 3,100,000 fr. of public revenue for 1902, while the expenditure for the same year is put at 2,023,376 fr. That this restriction of public conveyance to Government vessels alone is not altogether a public gain my own experience demonstrated. I bad wished to leave Stanley Pool for the Upper Congo at an early date after in my arrival in Leopoldville, but as the Government vessels were mostly crowded, I could not proceed with any comfort by one of these.

The steam-ship " Plandre," one of the largest of these vessels, which left Leopoldville for Stanley Falls on the 22nd June, and by which I had, at first, intended to proceed, quitted port with more than twenty European passengers over her complement, all of whom, I was informed, would have to sleep on deck. I accordingly was forced to seek other means of travelling, and through the kindness of the "Director of one of the large commercial Companies (the " Societe Anonyme Belge du Haut- Congo) I found excellent accommodation, as a guest, on one of his steamers. Although thus an invited guest and not paying any passage money, special permission had to be sought from the Congo Government before this act of courtesy could be shown me, and i saw the telegram from the local authority, authorizing my conveyance to Chumbiri.

This commercial Company has three other steamers, hut the interdiction referred to applies to the entire flotilla of trading vessels of Congolese nationality on the Upper River. Bespite the fact that

these vessels are not allowed to earn freight or passage, they are all, for their tonnage, heavily taxed, while the Government vessels, which earn considerable sums on transport of general goods and passengers, pay no taxes. The four vessels of the Societe Anonyme Belge du Haut-Congo referred to, of which the largest is only, I believe, one of 30 tons, pay annually, I was informed, the following taxes : —

TABEL, komt hier later bij afwerking

Himself and each European member of the crew must then pay 30 fr. per annum as " imposition personnelle," whilst each native member of the crew costs his employers 3 fr. per head for engagement licence annually, and 10 fr. per head per annum as " imposition personnels."

The "President Urban," the largest steamer of the Company referred to, under these various heads pays, I was informed, a sum of not less than 11,000 fr. in taxes per annum. Should she carry any of the agents of the Company owning her, or any of its goods, save within the restricted area of its Concession, her owners must pay to the Congo Government both passage money and freight on these, just as though they had been sent by one of the Government vessels.

No firewood may be cut by the public within half-an-hour's steaming distance of any . of the Government wooding posts, which are naturally chosen at the best wooding, sites available along the various waterways, so that the 10,000 fr. wood- cutting licence which the " President Urban " pays entitles her only to cut up for uel such suitable timber as her crew may be able to find in the leas accessible spots.

At F * I spent four days. I had visited this place in August 1887 when the line of villages comprising the settlement contained from 4,000 to 5,000 people. Most of these villages to-day are entirely deserted, the forest having grown over the abandoned sites, and the entire community at the present date cannot number more than 500 souls. There is no Government station at F *, but the Government telegraph line which connects Leopoldville with Coquilhatville, the headquarters of the Equator district, runs through the once

townlands of the F * villages close to the river bank. The people of the riverside towns, and from '20 miles inland, have to keep the lino clear of undergrowth, and in many places the telegraph road serves as a useful public path between neighbouring villages. Some of the natives of the neighbourhood complained that for this compulsory utilitarian service they had received no remuneration of any kind ; and those at a distance that they found it bard to feed themselves when far from their homes they were engaged on this task. Inquiry, in the neighbourhood established that no payment for this work had seemingly been made for fully a year.

Men are also required to work at the neighbouring wood-cutting post for the Government steamers, which is in charge of a native Headman or Kapita, who is under the surveillance of a European "Chef de Poste " at Bolobo, the nearest Government station, which lies about 40 miles up-stream. These wood-cutters, although required compulsorily to serve and sometimes irregularly detained, are adequately paid for their services.

The F * villages have to supply kwanga (the prepared cassava root already referred to) for the neighbouring wood-cutting post, and the quantity required of them is, they asserted, in excess, of their means of supply and out of proportion to the value received in exchange. The supply required of them was fixed, I found, at 380 kwanga (or boiled cassava puddings) every six days, each pudding weighing from 4 lb. to 6 lb., or a total of from 1,700 lb. to 1 ton weight of carefully prepared food- stuffs per week. Por this a payment of one brass rod per kwanga is made, giving a sum of 19 fr. in all for the several villages whose task it is to keep the wood post victualled. These villages by careful computation I reckoned contained 240 persons all told — men, women, and children. In addition to preparing and carrying this food a considerable distance to the Government post, these people have to take their share in keeping the telegraph line clear and in supplying Government workmen. One elderly man was arrested at the period of my visit to serve as a soldier and was taken to Bolobo, 40 miles away, but was subsequently released upon representations made by a missionary who knew him. The number of wood-cutters at the local post is about thirty I was informed, so that the amount of food levied is beyond their , requirements, and the

excess is said to be sold by them at a profit to the crews of passing steamers. At one of the smallest of these F* villages, where there are not more than ten persons all told, and only three of these women able to prepare and cook the food, 40 kwanga (180 lb. to 270 lb. weight of food) had to be supplied every week at a payment of 40 rods (2 fr.). These people said: "**How can we possibly plant and weed our gardens, seek and prepare and boil the cassava, make it into portable shape, and then carry it nearly a day's journey to the post ? Moreover, if the kwanga we make are a little small or not well-cooked, or if we complain that the rods given us in settlement are too short, as they sometimes are, then we are beaten by the woodcutters, and sometimes we are detained several days to cut firewood as a punishment."**

Statements of this kind might be tediously multiplied.

The local mission station at F* requires much smaller kwanga than the Government size, getting from 1 lb. to 2 lb. weight of food at the same price viz., 1 rod. The kwanga made up for general consumption, as sold in local markets, weigh only about 1 lb. each. The Government requires, delivered free, even at considerable distances, from four and a-half to six times the weight of prepared food to that sold- publicly for 1\2 d.

In most parts of the Upper Congo the recognized currency consists of lengths of brass wire; these lengths varying according to the district. At one; period the recognized length of a brass rod was 18 inches, but to-day the average length of a rod cannot be more than 8 or 9 inches. The nominal value of one of these rods is 1/2d. twenty of them being reckoned to the franc ; but the intrinsic value, or actual cost of a rod to any importer of the brass wire direct from Europe, would come to less than a 1/2d. I should say. Such as it is, clumsy and dirty, this is the principal form of currency known on the Upper Congo where, saving some parts of the French Congo I visited, European money is still quite unknown.

The reasons for the decrease of population at F * given me, both by the natives and by others, point to sleeping sickness as probably one of the principal factors. There has also been emigration to the

opposite side of the river, to the French shore, but this course has never, I gather, been popular. The people have not easily accommodated themselves to the altered condition of life brought about by European Government in their midst. Where formerly thsy were accustomed to take long voyages down to Stanley Pool to sell slaves, ivory, "dried fish, or other]ocal products against such European merchandise as the liateke middlemen around the Pool had to offer in exchange, ihe-y find themselves to-day debarred from all such form -<of activity.

The open selling of slaves and the canoe convoys, which once navigated the Upper *.Congo, have everywhere disappeared. No act of the Congo State Government has 'perhaps produced more laudable results than the vigorous suppression of this wide- spread evil. In the 160 miles' journey from Leopold ville to E * I did not see one large native canoe in mid-stream, and only a few small canoes creeping along the -shore near to native villages. While the suppression of an open form of slave dealing has been an undoubted gain, much that was not reprehensible in native life has dis- appeared along with it. The trade in ivory has to-day entirely passed from the hands of the natives of the Upper Congo, and neither fish nor any other outcome of local ■industry now changes hands on an extensive scale or at any distance from home.

So far as I could observe in the limited time at my disposal, the people of F * now rarely leave their homes save when required by the local Government ■official at Bolobo to serve as soldiers, or woodcutters at one of the Government posts, -or to convey the weekly supplies of food required of .them to the nearest Government station. These demands for food-stuffs comprise fowls and goats for consumption by dhe European members of the Government staff at Leopoldville, or for passengers on the Government steamers. They emanate from the Chief of the post at Bolobo who, I understand, is required in so far as he can, to keep up this supply. In order to obtain this provision he is forced to exercise continuous pressure on the local popula- tion, and within recent times that pressure has not always taken the form of mere requisition. Armed expeditions have been necessary and a more forcible method of levying supplies adopted than the law either contemplated or justifies. Very specific

statements as to the harm one of these recent expeditions worked in the country around ■F* were made to me during my stay there. The officer in command of the -G * district, at the head of a band of soldiers passed through a portion of the

• district wherein the natives, unaccustomed to the duties expected of them, had bee]

• backward in sending in both goats and fowls.

The result of this expedition, which took place towards the end of 1900, was that in fourteen small villages traversed seventeen persons disappeared. Sixteen of these whose names were given to me were killed by the soldiers, and their bodies recovered by their friends, and one was reported as missing. Of those killed eleven were men, ' three women, and one a boy child of 5 years. Ten persons were tied up and taken .;away as prisoners, but were released on payment of sixteen goats by their friends, except one, a child, who died at Bolobo. In addition 4S goats were taken away and 225 fowls ; .■several houses were burned, and a quantity of their owners' property either pillaged or destroyed. Representations on behalf of the injured villages were made to the Inspecteur d'Etat at Leopoldville, who greatly deplored the excesses of his subordinate, and sent to hold an inquiry and to pay compensation to the relatives of those killed and for the live-stock or goods destroyed or taken away. The local estimate of the damage done amounted to 71,730 brass rods (3, 5 SO fr.), which included 20,500 brass rods (1,025 it.), assessed as compensation for the seventeen people. Three of these were Chiefs, and the amount asked for would have worked out at about 1,000 brass rods (50 fr.) per head, not probably an extravagant estimate for human life, seeing that the goats were valued at 400 rods each (20 fr.), A total sum, 1 was told, of 18,000 brass .rods (950 fr.) was actually paid to the injured villages by the Government Commis- sioner, who came from Stanley Pool ; and this sum, it was said, was levied as a fine for his misconduct on the official responsible for the raid. I could not learn what other form of punishment, if any, was inflicted on this officer. He remained as the Govern- ment Representative for some time afterwards, was then transferred to another post in the immediate

neighbourhood, and finally went home at the expiration of his period of service.

At Bolobo, where I spent ten days waiting for a steamer to continue my journey,